

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SS-15 SSO-00 NSCE-00
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3401
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 22736

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y-TEXT THROUGHOUT

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EG IS XF
SUBJECT: BEGIN-SADAT MEETING AND NEXT PHASE OF PEACE
- PROCESS

REF: CAIRO 21270

1. THE CHRISTMAS MEETING BETWEEN SADAT AND BEGIN PROMISES
TO BE A TOUGH ENCOUNTER SINCE THEIR PUBLIC POSITIONS RE-
MAIN FAR APART. ALTHOUGH LITTLE HARD INFORMATION HAS
LEAKED OUT, WEIZMAN-GAMASY TALKS RESULTED IN NEW SOBER-
NESS AMONG HIGH LEVEL EGYPTIANS. IN ADDITION, MOST
EGYPTIANS FIND MEDIA REPORTS OF BEGIN'S PROPOSALS FOR
WEST BANK DISCOURAGING AND NOT TOO DISSIMILAR FROM PRO-
POSALS PUT FORWARD PRIOR TO SADAT TRIP TO JERUSALEM (E.G.
DAYAN'S FUNCTIONAL ARRANGEMENT). IF ISMAILIA SUMMIT DOES
NOT RESULT IN CONCRETE PROGRESS--AT A MINIMUM, MUTUALLY
AGREEABLE STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES--PARTIES WILL BE FACED
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WITH PROBLEM OF HOW TO KEEP MOMENTUM UP AND AVOID SERIOUS
PUBLIC LETDOWN. U.S. MAY WELL BE CALLED UPON PUBLICLY
OR PRIVATELY BY ONE OR BOTH SIDES TO TAKE MORE ACTIVE
ROLE.

2. IF, HOWEVER, A MUTUALLY AGREEABLE STATEMENT OF
PRINCIPLES CAN BE WORKED OUT, EITHER AT ISMAILIA OR SHORT-

LY THEREAFTER, IT WILL MARK THE END OF THE FIRST STAGE OF SADAT'S NEW PEACE OFFENSIVE WHICH BEGAN WITH HIS JERUSALEM VISIT. THE NEXT STAGE OF DETAILED NEGOTIATIONS IS LIKELY TO BE MORE PROLONGED AND DIFFICULT FOR ALL PLAYERS. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, SADAT WILL FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE STICK TO THE STRATEGY HE HAS PURSUED SINCE 1972 (THE JERUSALEM VISIT WAS, AFTER ALL, ONLY THE MOST

DRAMATIC EVENT IN WHAT HAS BEEN A REMARKABLY CONSISTENT STRATEGY). THE FOLLOWING ARE WHAT WE CONSIDER MAIN ELEMENTS OF THIS STRATEGY AND HOW THEY MIGHT COME INTO PLAY DURING FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS.

3. COMMITMENT TO NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. SADAT'S OVER-RIDING FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVE CONTINUES TO BE A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT AND HE WILL NOT, AT THIS LATE STAGE, EASILY BE PUT OFF BY INTRANSIGENCE OR TIMIDITY OF OTHERS. SOME OBSERVERS HAVE REMARKED THAT SADAT IS SO DETERMINED TO HAVE PEACE HE WILL DO IT "IN SPITE OF ISRAEL OR U.S." SADAT HAS FULL SUPPORT OF HIS PEOPLE, BUT THEIR EXPECTATIONS ARE EXTREMELY HIGH AND HE NEEDS PROGRESS SOON. HE IS LIKELY, THEREFORE, TO SEEK TO PRESSURE ISRAEL TO DEMONSTRATE CONCRETE PROGRESS THROUGH HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS, ADDITIONAL HIGH LEVEL DIRECT TALKS (SECRET OR PUBLIC), AND VIA THE U.S. ABOVE ALL HE WILL NOT WANT NEGOTIATIONS TO BOG DOWN. AT SAME TIME, HE IS UNLIKELY--EXCEPT IN FACE

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OF ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE--TO LASH OUT AT ISRAEL OR U.S., BUT RATHER TO ATTEMPT TO OVERCOME OUR HESITANCY OR ISRAELI TOUGHNESS BY FURTHER DEMONSTRATIONS OF HIS OWN SINCERE COMMITMENT TO PEACE.

4. REFUSAL TO BE DIVERTED BY PERIPHERAL ISSUES. SADAT HAS REPEATEDLY DEMONSTRATED THAT HE WILL NOT ALLOW HIS FOCUS ON A SETTLEMENT TO BE DIVERTED BY WHAT HE CONSIDERS PERIPHERAL ISSUES. THUS, HE IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO IGNORE OIL DRILLING IN GULF OF SUEZ, NEW SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY, OR OTHER ACTIONS THAT MOST OTHER ARABS WILL CITE AS EVIDENCE OF ISRAELI BAD FAITH. IN HIS PRESENT SELF-CONFIDENT MOOD WE EXPECT SADAT MIGHT EVEN IGNORE DIRECT ISRAELI MILITARY STRIKES INTO SOUTHERN LEBANON, AS LONG AS HE BELIEVES PROGRESS IS IMMINENT, ALTHOUGH SUCH WOULD CAUSE HIM PROBLEMS AT HOME AND IN ARAB WORLD.

5. DEALING THE SOVIETS OUT. SADAT IS DETERMINED (SINCE AT LEAST JULY 1972 EXPULSION OF 15,000 SOVIET MILITARY TECHNICIANS) TO HAVE AN ESSENTIALLY AMERICAN SETTLEMENT. AT A MAXIMUM, WE EXPECT HE WOULD AGREE TO HAVING SOVIETS PUT THEIR IMPRIMATUR ON AN AGREEMENT (ALREADY

REACHED ELSEWHERE) AT GENEVA, BUT HE WILL DO NOTHING TO GET THEM THERE. "GENEVA" CAN TAKE PLACE IN CAIRO. IF OTHERS WANT THEM IN, IT WILL BE UP TO THEM TO PERSUADE SOVIETS TO COME. THIS NOT ONLY FITS WITH SADAT'S PERSONAL PREDELICIONS, BUT WE SUSPECT HE BELIEVES IT WOULD ENCOURAGE ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT IN ISRAEL AND U.S.

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - T E X T (T H R O U G H O U T)

6. RELIANCE ON U.S. SADAT HAS EMPHASIZED THAT DESPITE "NEW ERA" OF DIRECT CONTACT, U.S. ROLE IS CRUCIAL. AMERICAN OFFICIALS, CONGRESSMEN AND PROMINENT PRIVATE CITIZENS HAVE URGED HIM FOR YEARS TO MEET "FACE-TO-FACE" WITH ISRAELIS. SADAT BELIEVES THAT BY DOING SO HE HAS MADE BOTH MAJOR CONCESSION TO ISRAEL AND MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR USG TO HAVE BACKING OF AMERICAN PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL OPINION IN WIELDING ITS INFLUENCE WITH ISRAEL. AS NEGOTIATIONS GET TOUGH HE WILL EXPECT STRONG AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT THAT, IN HIS VIEW, IS COMPATIBLE WITH PRINCIPLES ALREADY STATED BY PRESIDENT CARTER. WE SHOULD NOT UNDERESTIMATE EXTENT TO WHICH EGYPTIANS ARE STILL COUNTING ON U.S. BACKING. WE HAVE ALREADY HEARD SOME OFFICIAL EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN OVER AMERICAN PASSIVITY AT CAIRO CONFERENCE. FOR THE MOMENT THESE REMAIN MUTED, BUT SHOULD TALKS BREAK DOWN, THEY WILL

RISE IN VOLUME AND INTENSITY.

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7. NEW ELEMENT. ONE CHANGE IN SADAT'S STRATEGY CONCERNS THE ARABS. EGYPT IS NOW RELYING ON ITSELF IN PLACE OF EARLIER EMPHASIS ON ARAB SOLIDARITY. SADAT NO LONGER VIEWS EGYPT'S ROLE AS MEDIATOR OF INTRA-ARAB DISPUTES (N.B. VP MUBARAK ONLY VISITED MOROCCO NOT ALGERIA ON LAST TRIP), BUT IS FLEXING ITS MUSCLES. SADAT IS CONFIDENT OF EGYPT'S STRENGTH TO ACT ALONE AND BELIEVES JORDAN, SYRIA AND PALESTINIANS WILL SOONER OR LATER HAVE TO ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS. HE FULLY EXPECTS JORDAN TO DO SO SOON, BUT WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED TO SEE OTHER TWO UNDERGO FORCIBLE CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP BEFORE DOING SO. SADAT GIVES IMPRESSION OF ENJOYING CUTTING ASAD DOWN TO SIZE--A KIND OF "THAT'S FOR LEBANON" SYNDROME. HE SEEMS CONFIDENT THAT SAUDIS HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO BACK HIM WHETHER THEY LIKE IT OR NOT. AS NEGOTIATIONS PROCEED WE EXPECT EGYPT TO KEEP EMPTY CHAIRS AVAILABLE, BUT NOT TO URGE OTHER ARABS TO ATTEND. SADAT, HOWEVER, WILL PROBABLY PERIODICALLY REMIND THEM OF DIRE CONSEQUENCES OF REMAINING OUT AND NOT LET THEM FORGET THEY MAY FORCE EGYPT INTO SEPARATE DEAL.

8. CONCLUSION. SADAT IS GOING TO GET A SETTLEMENT IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE OR RESIGN. LEST ANYONE DOUBT HIS DETERMINATION, HE HAS MADE NO SECRET OF FACT THAT HE WILL PURSUE BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS CONCURRENTLY WITH NEGOTIATIONS FOR COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. WHETHER HE WOULD ACTUALLY SIGN BILATERAL AGREEMENT (WITH OR WITHOUT ITS IMPLEMENTATION BEING CONTINGENT UPON OTHER BILATERAL ACCORDS) WILL PROBABLY DEPEND ON SUCH FACTORS AS (A) TIME THAT HAS ELAPSED BETWEEN NOW AND THE MOMENT OF TRUTH; (B) CONFIDENTIAL

EXTENT OF SUPPORT HE RECEIVING FROM U.S. FOR COMPREHENSIVE CONFIDENTIAL

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SETTLEMENT; (C) WHICH OTHER PARTIES HAVE JOINED NEGOTIATIONS; (D) HOW GOOD A DEAL HE HAS RECEIVED FOR EGYPT; AND (E) STATE OF EGYPT'S RELATIONS WITH SYRIA AND SAUDI ARABIA. THERE IS, HOWEVER, LITTLE DOUBT THAT HE WOULD HAVE--AT LEAST AS OF NOW--SUPPORT OF VAST MAJORITY OF EGYPTIANS FOR SEPARATE PEACE REGARDLESS OF WHAT HE HAS OBTAINED FOR OTHERS. AS NOTED REFTEL, LARGE SEGMENT OF

ELITE WOULD HAVE QUALMS ABOUT SEPARATE AGREEMENT BUT THEIR
OPPOSITION WOULD PROBABLY NOT DETER SADAT IF HE HAS OB-
TAINED HIS MINIMAL REQUIREMENTS AND STILL MET WITH ARAB
REJECTION.

9. COMMENT. I AM SUBMITTING THIS MESSAGE AS THE THOUGHT-
FUL COMMENTS OF MY POLITICAL COUNSELOR ARTHUR LOWRIE. I
AM IN GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH ITS THRUST, BUT DISAGREE ON
THREE POINTS: (A) AT THE MOMENT SADAT IS IN LOW SPIRITS
AFTER WEIZMAN VISIT, AND (B) WHILE SADAT WANTS TO MOVE
FORWARD, HE WANTS TO DO SO IN COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT
AND WILL NOT LIGHTLY ACCEPT BILATERAL AGREEMENT, EVEN IF
IT IS A GOOD ONE, UNLESS CIRCUMSTANCES ARE RIGHT. (C)
IF UPCOMING SADAT/BEGIN TALKS PCMV UNPRODUCTIVE, AND
ISRAELIS OR EGYPTIANS LEAK NATURE OF BEGIN PROPOSALS
(WHATEVER THEY MAY EVENTUALLY BE) ON SINAI AND WEST BANK,
SADAT WILL HAVE TO CONTEND WITH CONSIDERABLE DISILLUSION-
MENT AT HOME AND IN FRIENDLY ARAB STATES. THIS MAY NOT
DETER HIM FROM CONTINUING HIS EFFORTS, BUT SHOULD
CURRENT PEACE WAVE BE SPENT, HE WILL HAVE LESS SUPPORT
AT HOME, INCLUDING IN MILITARY, TO PURSUE HIS EFFORTS.
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